

MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



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*****ADVISORY – Important Information*****

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TO: All HAN Recipients

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SUBJECT: Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2010/2011

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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)
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Seasonal Influenza Vaccine For 2010/2011

March 29, 2010

This health advisory provides information on Maine CDC's plans for offering seasonal influenza vaccine for the upcoming fall.

Maine CDC is pleased to announce that for the 2010/2011 influenza season we plan on providing seasonal influenza vaccine for:

- **all Maine children ages 6 months to 18 years-old;**
- **employees of schools that provide onsite vaccine clinics on school days;**
- **pregnant women and their partners (through health care providers who routinely care for pregnant women);**
- **nursing home employees and residents;**
- **high risk adults in limited public health settings, the scope and number of such settings determined by our vaccine supply.**

Although the next flu season is more than a half-year ahead and some factors are still unknown, now is the time to begin planning the fall vaccination campaign. State Tobacco Settlement (Fund for a Healthy Maine) and two sources of federal funds are supporting this effort.

Background on Annual Pediatric Influenza Vaccine

Maine is following the US CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations over the past two years to promote phasing in of seasonal influenza vaccine for all children ages 6 months to 18 years old.

For several years, ACIP has recommended annual seasonal influenza vaccine for all children ages 6 months through 4 years as well as older children with conditions that place them at increased risk for complications from influenza. In the 2008/2009 influenza season, ACIP broadened its recommendations to include annual vaccination of all children ages 5-18 years.

As the 2009 H1N1 influenza emerged, ACIP included children ages 6 months through 18 years among the priority populations to receive H1N1 flu vaccination. This virus disproportionately affects children as well as pregnant women and young adults. An estimated 85,000 children were hospitalized from April - February in the U.S. due to H1N1, and about 1,250 have died. About 90% of deaths and hospitalizations due to seasonal flu are among people 65 years of age and older. By contrast, about 90% of the hospitalizations and deaths due to the pandemic strain of H1N1 have been among those under 65 years of age.

People who have received the pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine should also receive the seasonal influenza vaccine this fall. The upcoming vaccine will contain a pandemic H1N1 influenza component as well as two seasonal influenza components. We expect the pandemic strain of H1N1 influenza virus to continue to circulate, and

seasonal influenza strains that traditionally disproportionately affect those 65 and older will likely re-emerge as well. Therefore, it is recommended for the 2010/2011 flu season that all people, regardless of age, be vaccinated.

Implementing the full ACIP recommendations of annual influenza vaccination for all children presents a new challenge, because children do not have access to flu vaccine as widely as adults do. Many adults receive their annual flu vaccine at their place of employment, at community clinics, or in retail settings that do not offer vaccine to young children. Numerous studies and data, especially those from Japan, Michigan, South Dakota, Hawaii, and other states demonstrate that the most effective way to reach most children is to offer vaccine in the school setting.

Maine School Vaccine Campaign

2009/2010 Influenza Vaccine Campaign in Maine

Over the past several months, Maine's elementary and secondary schools, medical community, visiting nurses associations, municipal health departments, EMS, emergency management, and many others in our communities worked very hard together to vaccinate children against both seasonal and 2009 H1N1 influenza. Almost all school districts in the state supported school-based influenza vaccine clinics last fall, with many schools vaccinating more than 60% of their students. In addition, many younger children and some school-aged children received their flu vaccines at their own healthcare providers' offices.

Maine's 60% overall pandemic H1N1 vaccine rate for children 6 months – 17 years of age, leads the nation, along with other states that offered vaccine early in schools. Maine's 58% rate of seasonal flu vaccine for school-aged children this year was the highest reported from states. We are extremely grateful to the thousands of people and organizations across Maine who worked hard together to protect our children!

Moving Forward to 2010/2011

Maine CDC encourages elementary and secondary schools along with their communities to build on the momentum of this season's successful school clinics and begin planning pediatric flu vaccine clinics for the 2010/2011 season. While the studies and data support school-located vaccine clinics held during school hours as being the most effective in reaching the largest proportion of school-aged children, for those communities who desire to host other types of pediatric clinics, this vaccine can be used for that purpose too. We recognize there were many forms of successful pediatric flu vaccine clinics in Maine during the 2009/2010 season. Maine CDC will also supply seasonal flu vaccine to pediatric health care providers, recognizing they will need to reach younger children as well as some school-aged children.

A Maine CDC team, with representation from Maine Department of Education, is working to address schools' and communities' needs, such as vaccine clinic training, developing the ability for each school to be a vaccine distribution site (purchasing

refrigeration, etc), identifying Maine CDC staff in each region to assist schools, creating standardized consent forms, training on ImmPact, etc.

At this point in time, we do not anticipate being able to furnish vaccine supplies such as needles and syringes or funding for vaccine administration as we did in 2009-2010. However, we anticipate insurance reimbursement for vaccine administration will be available, and we are working on improving the ease and access to this funding source for the fall. We also will be able to provide some funds for school-located vaccine clinic infrastructure this spring, such as refrigeration.

We encourage schools and communities who are interested in conducting fall flu vaccine clinics for their children to identify interested community members (such as parents and health care providers) to start planning and assisting in this effort. Maine CDC will be providing additional communication soon on the availability of resources such as training and necessary equipment.

Next Steps

In order to receive state-supplied vaccine, schools and health care providers must sign up to become a Maine CDC Maine Immunization Program (MIP) providers by the end of April. Providers who already have a four-digit MIP PIN do not need to register again. However, three-digit H1N1 PINs are no longer valid. Please see the timeline below for important deadlines and information.

More information will follow. Please send your questions on the 2010/2011 flu vaccine season, including school and other pediatric-focused clinics to flu.questions@maine.gov.

Timeline for 2010-2011 flu season vaccination activities:

April 2010

- Providers who need a MIP PIN must register by **April 30**.

May 2010

- MIP will mail out influenza vaccine order forms for the 2010-2011 influenza season by **May 15**.
- Providers must return the influenza vaccine order form to MIP by **May 31**.
- Maine CDC will work with Department of Education (DOE) to assure schools' ability to properly store and handle vaccine.

June 2010

- MIP will send out confirmations for vaccine orders.

July 2010

- Maine CDC will develop an information package for school clinics, including vaccine information sheets (VIS), consent forms, usage reporting forms, etc.

August-September 2010

- Schools distribute VIS, consent form and other related information to parents as soon as next school year starts;
- Each school chooses several potential clinic dates and informs MIP of the dates;
- MIP confirms the dates of each school clinic and distributes vaccine according to its availability.

September-December 2010

- MIP ships flu vaccine to schools and health care providers.

Questions and Answers:

Q. I am already an MIP provider. Do I still need to register as a vaccine provider for the coming flu season?

A. No. MIP providers that have a standard 4-digit PIN need not register for a new one.

Q. I became a MIP provider to receive H1N1 vaccine. Do I need to register as a H1N1 provider for the coming flu season?

A. Yes. H1N1 PINs were established for one-time distribution of the H1N1 vaccine. These were 3-digit PINs. Distribution of seasonal influenza vaccine will require the standard MIP 4-digit PIN.

Q. In 2009-2010 our school received vaccine from a cooperating vaccine provider, and did not register to be an MIP provider. Can we do the same thing this year?

A. MIP encourages schools or school districts to become vaccine providers where feasible. However, if you do not have the ability, you may want to start to explore your partnerships now.

Q. What about the liability concerns that were raised by some schools?

A. We recognize that some schools expressed concerns about liability issues for children receiving vaccine in the school setting. These concerns were addressed this past fall in the Governor's Emergency Declaration. We are committed to continuing to address these liability concerns

Q. Our school would like to receive vaccine directly from MIP. What do we need to do?

A. You can register to become a MIP provider. Vaccine provider enrollment forms are available at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/immunization/providers/forms-updates.shtml>. Requirements for becoming a vaccine provider include having appropriate training and refrigeration.

Q. Will nursing homes still be able to receive flu vaccine for staff and residents?

A. Yes. There will be no change to the distribution of flu vaccine to nursing homes.

Q. Who should I contact with questions or for more information?

A. Please send questions or feedback to: flu.questions@maine.gov.